

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (previously amended) An apparatus for coupling comprising:

a generally planar member having a pair of generally opposed surfaces and an oblong slot therebetween disposed at an engaging region, said oblong slot defined by a pair of opposite walls;

a coupling member having an external thread set and having a non-spherical elongated portion for contacting the opposite walls of the oblong slot, with contact between the elongated portion and the oblong slot occurring across a substantial length of the oblong slot whereby said planar member and coupling member are locked in position relative to each other when said portion is inserted into the oblong slot of the planar member; and

a non-planar member having an internal thread set adapted to engage the external thread set of the coupling member thereby connecting the non-planar member to the planar member, wherein portions of the pair of generally opposed surfaces of the planar member extend into the thread set of the non-planar member.

2. (canceled).

3. (previously amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the oblong slot is formed in a region adjacent an edge portion of the planar member and wherein the opposite walls of the oblong slot are generally parallel and in contact with generally parallel walls of the elongated portion of the coupling member.

4. (previously amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the planar member has more than one oblong slot.

5. (canceled)

6. (previously amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the coupling member has a larger diameter dimension than a thickness dimension of the planar member, and

the oblong slot has generally parallel sides extending between a pair of ends and a distance between the pair of ends of the oblong slot is substantially greater than the thickness dimension.

7 - 9 (canceled)

10. (previously amended) An apparatus for connecting two members together comprising:

a first member having a pair of generally opposed major surfaces and defining an engaging region, and an oblong slot disposed at said engaging region, said oblong slot defining a pair of generally parallel planar walls;

an elongate threaded coupling member having an external thread set and an engaging portion for engaging the oblong slot of the first member, said threaded coupling member removably engaging the oblong slot, and said coupling member having a pair of generally parallel planar walls engaging said walls of the first member when said engaging portion is inserted into said first member, with contact between the walls of the first member and walls of the coupling member occurring along a length of the slot thereby preventing rotation of the first member relative to the coupling member about an axis generally perpendicular to a direction of elongation of the oblong slot; and

a second member having an internal thread set sized to cooperate with the external thread set of the threaded coupling member, wherein said external thread set of the threaded coupling member is threadedly received within the internal thread set, and wherein portions of the first member extend into the internal thread set of the second member.

11. (previously amended) An apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the elongate threaded coupling member is two longitudinal portions of a threaded shank each having an threaded exterior surface and a substantially flat interior surface.

12. (canceled)

13. (previously amended) An apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the thickness of the first member is less than a diameter of the internal thread set, and wherein the oblong slot has a pair of sides extending across a portion of the first member between a pair of ends and the first member thickness is substantially less than a distance between the pair of ends.

14. (previously amended) An apparatus for joining two members via a threaded coupling member, said apparatus comprising:

a first member having an oblong slot disposed proximate to an edge;

an elongate threaded coupling member having an external thread set and a non-spherical engaging portion corresponding to the oblong slot of the first member, said slot preventing rotation of the first member relative to said coupling member about an axis generally perpendicular to the slot when said portion of the coupling member is inserted into said slot; and

a second member having an internal thread set sized to cooperate with the external thread set of the threaded coupling member, said internal thread set operatively receiving a portion of both the external thread set of the threaded coupling member and a portion of the first member to securely bind the first member to the second member.

15 - 19 (canceled)

20. (withdrawn) An apparatus for joining two members via a threaded coupling member, said apparatus comprising:

a first member having an portion extending from an edge and defining an interlocking structure;

an elongate threaded coupling member having an external thread set and an engaging portion corresponding to the interlocking structure of the first member, said threaded coupling member removably engaging the interlocking structure;

a second member having an internal thread set sized to cooperate with the external thread set of the threaded coupling member, said internal thread set operatively receiving a portion of the external thread set of the threaded coupling member and a portion of the first member to securely bind the first member to the second member.

21. (withdrawn) An apparatus for joining two members via a threaded coupling member, said apparatus comprising:

a generally planar member having an elongated L-shaped structure defined at an edge thereof;

an elongated threaded coupling member having an external thread set, said coupling member being sized to be received within the L-shaped structure of the generally planar member, said threaded coupling member extending away from the edge of the first member; and

a knob member having an internal thread set sized to cooperate with the external thread set of the threaded coupling member, said internal thread set operatively receiving a portion of both the external thread set of the threaded coupling member and a portion of the generally planar member.

22. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the elongated threaded coupling member defines an elongated rectangular channel sized to receive a portion of the L-shaped structure.

23. (withdrawn) An apparatus for joining two members via a threaded coupling member, said apparatus comprising:

a generally planar member defining an elongated slot;

an elongated threaded coupling member having an external thread set, at least a portion of said coupling member being configured to pass through the elongate slot of the generally planar member so that portions of the external thread set are disposed at opposite sides of the planar member; and

a knob member having an internal thread set sized to cooperate with the external thread set of the threaded coupling member, said internal thread set operatively receiving a portion of both the external thread set of the threaded coupling member and a portion of the generally planar member.

24. (withdrawn) An apparatus for joining two members via a threaded coupling member, said apparatus comprising:

a first member defining a slot which passes between opposed sides of the first member;

a threaded coupling member having an external thread set, at least a portion of said coupling member being configured to pass through the slot of the first member so that portions of the external thread set are disposed at the opposed sides of the first member; and

a knob member having an internal thread set sized to cooperate with the external thread set of the threaded coupling member, said internal thread set operatively receiving a portion of both the external thread set of the threaded coupling member and a portion of the first member.

25. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the elongate threaded coupling member is two longitudinal portions of a threaded shank each having an threaded exterior surface and a substantially flat interior surface.

26. (previously amended) An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the thickness of the first member is less than a diameter of the internal thread set, and a distance between ends of the oblong slot is substantially greater than the thickness of the first member.

27 – 31. (canceled)